

REMARKS

Claims 2, 10 and 15-20 have been cancelled without prejudice. The claims have been amended as set forth above. Thus, claims 1, 3-9 and 11-14 remain for consideration in this application.

Claims 1, 4-6, 8, 9 and 12-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Watanabe (USP 5,880,565).

Claims 15-20 have been cancelled without prejudice. Additionally, claims 1 and 9 have been amended. Independent claim 1 now includes the features of cancelled claim 2. Independent claim 9 now includes the features of cancelled claim 10.

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 2, 3, 7, 10 and 11 contained allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Amended independent claims 1 and 9 represent claims 2 and 10 rewritten in independent form. Furthermore, claims 3-8 and 11-14 are now dependent, either directly or indirectly, from claims 1 and 9, respectively. Accordingly, it is submitted that the rejection over Watanabe is now moot, in view of the amendments to the claims. Thus it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn, and that claims 1, 3-9 and 11-14 be passed onto allowance.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and accompanying remarks, it is submitted that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. A prompt and favorable reconsideration of the rejection and an indication of allowability of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Application No. 10/659,396
Art Unit: 2837

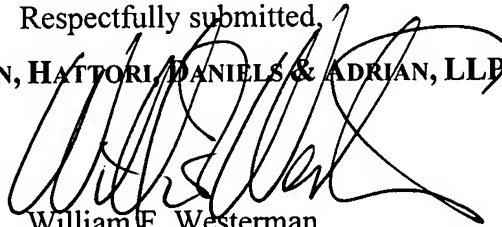
Amendment under 37 C.F.R. §1.111
Attorney Docket No.: 031153

If the Examiner believes that there are issues remaining to be resolved in this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite and complete prosecution of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to William F. Westerman, is written over the firm name.

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